

joined the Armed Forces and made their promise to serve their country. We will begin to meet the long-term care needs of our aging veterans. We will begin to lower the waiting times for our medical appointments that veterans have to endure now.

Mr. Speaker, after years of flat line budgets, this action is sorely needed. I salute this move taken by the Vice President this morning.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

HARD TIMES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. MORAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MORAN of Kansas. Mr. Speaker, last Thursday I spoke on this House floor about the crisis facing farmers and ranchers. This evening, I continue my efforts to inform my colleagues about the seriousness of the issues and the need to act now.

Last week, I introduced with some of my colleagues legislation that takes an important step to help producers make it through this period of extremely low prices. I encourage my colleagues to support H.R. 2568, the Market Loss Assistance Act of 1999. This straightforward bill provides producers an immediate shot in the arm. Under this bill, producers would receive an additional payment equal to 75 percent of their current farm payment. While this is only one part of a solution to help producers, it is an important part, and it provides immediate assistance. We need to assure our farmers that relief is on its way. Let us begin the debate on disaster assistance now.

Part of the problem is the loss of exports. In 1996, agricultural exports hit a record of \$59.9 billion, and since then, agricultural exports have fallen substantially. This year, exports are predicted to be \$49 billion for a loss of over 18 percent since 1996, just 3 years ago.

Not surprisingly, as exports have fallen, so has net farm income. Since 1996, net farm income has fallen to \$45 billion, a decline of 15 percent. That \$45 billion net farm income now stands at the same level as a decade ago. Does anyone think the cost of fertilizer, land payments, equipment, and other farm inputs have remained the same price for the last decade? Of course not.

In the world of agricultural export promotion we have lost the battle on behalf of farmers, and if the current trend continues, we may soon lose the war.

This chart paints a very clear picture on where the United States is on its commitment to helping American farmers and ranchers compete around the world. About \$8.45 billion is spent

each year on agricultural subsidies. Of this, the United States represents \$122 million or roughly only 1.4 percent.

We repeatedly tell our farmers and ranchers to produce for the world and compete for world markets. When your principle export competitor is the European community, the battle for market share under these conditions does not take long. In 1996, the EU spent 69 times more than we spent for export assistance. We cannot let this go on.

Out of this pie, 83.5 percent of the export assistance programs are spent by the European community. Ours are 2.5 percent.

When I first arrived in Congress, the Department of Agriculture indicated that we could not use export promotion funding because prices were too high and that shipping our U.S. farm products overseas might make them even more expensive. Now I am told we cannot use export funds because it would drive the prices even lower; a story I find particularly hard to believe in light of tight storage situation and low farm prices already well under the loan rate.

If the bitter medicine of low prices must be taken, I would recommend we aggressively work through this period and move U.S. agricultural products. Our farmers are locked in a battle competing for international markets. We cannot continue to abandon them. We must use our export programs forcefully, and we must act now.

Mr. Speaker, farmers are willing to compete in the global marketplace, but they cannot compete with foreign treasuries. I urge all my colleagues to join in the fight for the American farmer. We need short term disaster assistance; and for the long run, we need agricultural exports.

PROTECT OUR GREAT LAKES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. STUPAK. Mr. Speaker, last October you and our colleagues gave unanimous consent to my House Resolution which called on the President and the other Body to act to prevent the sale or diversion of Great Lakes water to foreign countries, businesses, corporations, and individuals. The House of Representatives, speaking with one voice, asked that procedures be established to guarantee that any sale or diversion be fully negotiated and approved by representatives of the United States Government and the Government of Canada in consultation with effective States and provinces.

I want to remind our colleagues of that House action, Mr. Speaker, because there is another threat to the Great Lakes, one posed by drilling for gas and oil in and under the waters of this great natural resource.

Mr. Speaker, we are not being alarmists. Water diversion and drilling for gas and oil are real threats to one of the world's most valuable resources.

Consider, Mr. Speaker, these facts. As I list each item, I want you to think about each of these facts in terms of potential impact on our Great Lakes.

Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered by water; 97.5 percent of that water is sea water. Only 2.5 percent of the surface water is fresh water. The Great Lakes contains 6 quadrillion gallons of fresh water, one-fifth of the Earth's fresh water resources.

The Great Lakes are home to 40 million people. One-quarter of Canada's population lives in the Great Lakes basin.

The World Bank predicts that by about the year 2025 more than 3 billion people in 52 countries will suffer water shortages for drinking or sanitation. More than 300 cities in China are currently experiencing water shortages, and more than 100 are deemed to be in condition of acute water scarcity. The global demand for water is doubling every 21 years.

Citizens of the United States and Canada use and consume more than 100 gallons per day per person. Eighty percent of the fresh water used goes to agricultural production.

I thank the Buffalo News for many of those facts, Mr. Speaker. I present them as random facts because like pieces of a puzzle they must be analyzed and arranged to see their importance.

The World Bank has studied this puzzle, and I call your attention to a quote from a World Bank report which appeared in the Buffalo News in a March 1999 story. The World Bank report predicted wars of the next century will be fought over fresh water.

So are we really being alarmists? I believe not.

A company in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, just one company, was given a permit last year to take up the 2.6 million gallons of water per day for 5 years from Lake Superior. I was joined by members of the Ontario parliament and the Canadian New Democratic Party in bringing public attention to this permit which was revoked by the Ontario government, but all fresh water will increasingly be eyed as a potential commodity.

A Vancouver-based company, Global Water Corporation, has an agreement with an Alaskan community of Sitka to take fresh water from a lake and ship it by tanker to China. The deal allows Global to take up to 5 billion gallons a year for 30 years. Global envisions 445 tankers per year carrying fresh water to Asia.

Now we have spoken of just two companies. We know the market is there. We can easily see the overhead is minimal, the market is expanding and the potential number of speculators and potential shippers is unlimited.

Let me say at this time, Mr. Speaker, that although I have mentioned China twice in my remarks, I am not attempting to invoke it as threat to our own security. China is merely a customer in need of fresh water now. The

entire world will be eying our natural resource.

As of today, the issue of sale and diversion of Great Lakes water and fresh water throughout this country remains unsolved. Following the House vote on my resolution, the U.S. and Canada have asked the International Joint Commission to study the issue on water diversion along the entire border from Alaska to the St. Lawrence River to Maine. Their preliminary report on diversion should be ready in August.

A final report on our joint water resources should be completed early next year. Until all questions on the sale or diversion of fresh water are answered, I have introduced legislation which would place a moratorium on any sale or diversion of fresh water in this country until we have these questions answered.

In the meantime, there is another threat to the Great Lakes as it is the policy of my home State of Michigan to allow drilling for gas and oil underneath the Great Lakes. Canada allows gas rigs drilling directly into Lake Ontario now. Proponents of oil drilling in the Great Lakes say the risk is minimal, small, tiny. I say tiny is too big. A gallon of oil spilled in Lake Superior would take 999 years to flow out, to be cleared by natural flow. Lake Michigan, 99 years; Lake Huron, 60 years.

Fresh water is a precious, scarce resource that needs our protection from exploitation of oil and gas companies and by sale and diversion of water.

□ 1900

IN THE SPIRIT OF THE ADA, WE MUST PASS H.R. 1180

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Minnesota (Mr. RAMSTAD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RAMSTAD. Mr. Speaker, 9 years ago today, President Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act into law. Since my election to the House later that same year and as a Minnesota State Senator from 1981 to 1990, I have worked hard to help people with disabilities live up to their full potential. That is why I, like many Members of this Chamber, strongly support the Americans with Disabilities Act, and we celebrate its enactment. But, Mr. Speaker, much more work needs to be done.

In signing the ADA, President Bush noted the law is designed "to ensure that people with disabilities are given the basic guarantees for which they have worked so long and so hard: independence, freedom of choice, control of their lives, the opportunity to blend fully and equally into the rich mosaic of the American mainstream."

As we celebrate the anniversary of this historic legislation, we reflect on all that has been achieved for people with disabilities. We must also, however, address where we have failed to empower people with disabilities.

In 1990, President Bush, in signing that historic act, reminded us that many of our fellow citizens with disabilities are unemployed. They want to work, and they can work. This is a tremendous pool of people who will bring to jobs diversity, loyalty, low turnover rate, and only one request: the chance to prove themselves.

Mr. Speaker, despite the remarkably low unemployment rate in America today, people with disabilities are still asking for this chance to prove themselves in the workplace. A recent Harris poll found that unemployment among people with disabilities is between 70 and 75 percent. Think of that: 70 to 75 percent, or three-quarters of people with disabilities are unemployed in America today. Historically, fewer than 1 percent of people with disabilities leave the SSI and SSDI rolls following successful rehabilitation. Individuals with disabilities have insufficient access to and choice of services they need to become employed. Most SSI and SSDI beneficiaries are never even offered rehabilitation services.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the ADA sought to improve this situation. But the ADA did not remove all the barriers within the current Federal programs that prohibit people with disabilities from working. It is time to eliminate work disincentives for people with disabilities. Eliminating work disincentives for people with disabilities is not just humane public policy, it is sound fiscal policy. It is not just the right thing to do, it is also the cost-effective thing to do.

President Bush knew that discouraging people with disabilities from working, from earning a regular paycheck, paying taxes and moving off public assistance actually results in reduced Federal revenues. He noted, and I am quoting again: "When you add together the Federal, State, local and private funds, it costs almost \$200 billion annually to support Americans with disabilities. In effect, to keep them dependent." And that was in 1990, Mr. Speaker. We certainly spend more than that today to keep people with disabilities dependent on the system.

Like everyone else, people with disabilities have to make decisions based on financial reality. Should they consider returning to work, or even making it through vocational rehabilitation, the risk of losing vital Federal health benefits often becomes too threatening to future financial stability. As a result, Mr. Speaker, they are compelled not to work.

Given the sorry state of present law, that is generally a reasonable and a rational decision for people with disabilities. The National Council on Disabilities said it best in its report to the 105th Congress on removing barriers to work when it wrote: "Social Security programs can be transformed from a lifelong entitlement into an investment in employment potential for thousands of individuals." Transforming these Federal programs to

springboards into the work force is a goal of legislation that I cosponsored in the House with the gentleman from New York (Mr. LAZIO) and many others on both sides of the aisle, the Work Incentives Improvement Act, or H.R. 1180. This critical legislation has been passed by the Committee on Commerce and a similar bill has been approved by the Senate.

Mr. Speaker, preventing people from working runs counter to the American spirit, one that thrives on individual achievements and the larger contributions to society that result. We must not rest until we pass the Work Incentives Improvement Act. People with disabilities deserve the opportunity to fulfill their dreams. Let us give them the chance to prove themselves now.

RECOGNIZE THE KASHMIRI PANDITS AS A MINORITY GROUP UNDER INDIAN LAW

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Speaker, although the world welcomes the apparent withdrawal this month of Pakistani forces from India's side of the line of control in Kashmir, we are continually reminded of the dangerous situation that still exists in that mountainous region.

Last Wednesday's New York Times reported that 20 Hindus were killed in 3 incidents before dawn last Tuesday in what the newspaper suggested could be a stepped-up campaign of hit-and-run tactics by Muslim insurgents in remote areas of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. I am sad to have to report that these kinds of attacks are nothing new, Mr. Speaker.

The worst of these attacks in the village of Lihota left 15 dead. Last week's violence was the fourth mass killing in Kashmir in just 3 weeks.

Mr. Speaker, this spring, when Islamic militants had been infiltrating India's territory with the support of, and active collaboration with, Pakistan, the world took notice. The fact that India and Pakistan are both nuclear powers stirred up fears of a wider war. When it became apparent even to Pakistan's ruler that their gambit in Kashmir was both a military and a propaganda disaster, the Pakistani Government reverted to its traditional ploy by trying to internationalize the conflict by bringing in the United States as a mediator, an effort that our administration has wisely resisted.

However, Mr. Speaker, the prospect of an India-Pakistan war obscures the ongoing violence that has destroyed the life of this entire region. While people of all faiths have suffered, the Hindu community of Kashmir has been particularly severe. The Pandits have suffered as individuals, singled out for violence, and as a community, forced to leave their ancestral homes and way of life, turned into refugees in their own country.